

PLEASE AMEND THE SPECIFICATION AS FOLLOWS:

page 5, line 8, after "and", replace "the" with "planarized by"

PLEASE AMEND THE CLAIMS AS FOLLOWS:

5 3. (AMENDED) The method of claim 1, wherein [removing said copper layer and] said barrier metal layer ~~is etched away~~ from areas not covered by photoresist [is done] through electroplating by reverse current.

4. (AMENDED) The method of claim 1, wherein said copper layer can be [replaced] substituted by a metal[s] layer selected from the group comprising gold, aluminum, tungsten, titanium, or silver.

10 5. (AMENDED) A method of forming and planarizing copper layer, comprising the steps of:

- providing a substrate;
- forming damascene trenches;
- depositing a barrier metal layer on said substrate and in said damascene trenches;

15 depositing a copper layer on said barrier metal layer, said copper layer
filling said damascene trenches;
forming a reverse tone photoresist mask;
etching said copper layer and barrier metal layer from areas not covered
a | by said reverse tone photoresist mask;
20 stripping of said photoresist;
planarizing by chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) said now exposed
copper layer and barrier metal layer; and
sealing said copper layer with a cap layer.

25 9. (AMENDED) The method of claim 5, wherein said copper layer can be
[replaced] substituted by a metal layer[s] selected from the group comprising
gold, aluminum, tungsten, titanium, or silver.

a2 c 10. (AMENDED) The method of claim 5, wherein said reverse tone
photoresist mask is a photoresist mask covering that part of said copper layer
which is in said trenches.

30 c 11. (AMENDED) The method of claim 5, wherein said reverse tone
photoresist mask [also] covers spaces between said damascene trenches having
a separation of less than a critical distance.
